

In the Claims

The following listing of the claims will replace, without prejudice, all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1-22 (cancelled).

23. (currently amended) An *in vitro/ex vivo* method for the cultivation of ~~connective tissue cells or progenitor cells thereof~~ chondrogenic cells, comprising the step of contacting said cells with a matrix comprising 1 to 10µg/ml polysulphated alginate.

24. (currently amended) The method according to claim 23, wherein said matrix is suitable for ~~the~~ a implantation into ~~the~~ a human or animal body.

25. (previously presented) The method according to claim 23, wherein said matrix further comprises nutrient media.

26. (currently amended) The method according to claim 23, wherein said matrix comprising 1 to 10µg/ml polysulphated alginate, further comprises unsulphated alginate.

27. (currently amended) The method according to claim ~~23~~ 26, wherein said polysulphated alginate and said unsulphated alginate are present in a weight ratio of between ~~1:10 and 1:100~~ 1:1000 and 1:10,000.

28. (cancelled).

29. (cancelled).

30. (currently amended) The method according to claim ~~29~~23, wherein said chondrogenic cells are chondrocyte precursor cells.
31. (currently amended) A matrix comprising 1 to 10µg/ml polysulphated alginate and ~~mammalian connective tissue cells or progenitor cells thereof~~ chondrogenic cells.
32. (cancelled).
33. (cancelled).
34. (cancelled).
35. (previously presented) The matrix of claim 31, which further comprises nutrient media.
36. (cancelled).
37. (previously presented) The matrix of claim 31, which further comprises unsulphated alginate.
38. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a matrix ~~according to claim 31~~, said matrix comprising chondrogenic cells and 1 to 10µg/ml polysulphated alginate.
39. (currently amended) A method for the ~~treatment or prevention of osteochondral a cartilage defects~~, said method comprising administering to the osteochondral cartilage defect a matrix comprising polysulphated alginate.

40. (currently amended) The method of claim 39, wherein said matrix further comprises ~~connective tissue cells or progenitor cells~~ chondrogenic cells.

41. (cancelled).

42. (cancelled).

43. (new) The method according to claim 23, wherein said chondrogenic cells are chondrocytes.

44. (new) The matrix according to claim 31, wherein said chondrogenic cells are chondrocytes.

45. (new) The matrix according to claim 31, wherein said chondrogenic cells are chondrocyte precursor cells.

46. (new) The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 38, wherein said chondrogenic cells are chondrocytes.

47. (new) The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 38, wherein said chondrogenic cells are chondrocyte precursor cells.

48. (new) The method according to claim 39, wherein said chondrogenic cells are chondrocytes.

49. (new) The method according to claim 39, wherein said chondrogenic cells are chondrocyte precursor cells.